

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #442-1

with

Harriet Kuwamoto (HK)

March 25, 1992

Kaimuki, O'ahu

BY: Joe Rossi (JR)

JR: This is an interview with Harriet Kuwamoto on March 25, 1992, in her Kaimuk\_ home. The interviewer is Joe Ross

Miss Kuwamoto, to begin with, could you maybe tell me a little bit about your parents and where they're from and how the family came to be in Hawai`i?

HK: My father came first to work in the [*sugar*] plantation. Which plantation, I'm not too sure. And then after he finished his contract—whatever number of years it was—he went back to Japan and brought my mother and my oldest brother (who was about seven or eight years old) and moved to Kona. And I was told that he (opened) a blacksmith (shop) in Kona. And after (we lived in Kona) for several years—my two (older) sisters, three brothers, my other sister, and myself were born—then (the family) moved to Honolulu. I don't know just exactly where (we) moved (to) in Honolulu, but I recall 1950 South Beretania Street.

JR: That was the address.

HK: We had a blacksmith shop (at that address), and a living quarters right next to the blacksmith shop, and a kitchen outside, like most of the families had. And I remember we had a grapevine. It must have been a pretty good-size property, but the blacksmith [*shop*] was pretty good size right next to our living area. That's where we lived until (the lease was up, and then) we moved over here, this area [*i.e.*, *Kaimuki*], I think that must have been about 1920.

JR: Do you remember what year the family moved to O`ahu?

HK: I was trying to figure out, because I was a very small infant. I was born in 1909, so maybe about 1910, because my three (younger) sisters were born here (in Honolulu).

JR: Okay.

HK: So it must have been about that time. I'm not too sure about the exact date.

JR: What was the date of your birth?

HK: Nine-eighteen-nine [*i.e., September 18, 1909*]. So we may have moved out here maybe either 1910 or 1911, because my next sister was born in 1911. It may have been just before 1911.

JR: How many children were in the family?

HK: Total, we had twelve.

JR: Twelve?

HK: Twelve. Five boys and seven girls. And we have one brother and five girls living now. Six are gone. So that's our family now. (My) brother lives in the back here (on Charles Street). He (was) the oldest of the three boys. See, we had two boys, two girls, three boys, and the oldest of the three boys is still . . .

JR: The second group of boys.

HK: Yeah, the second group of boys. And he's about ninety years old now, ninety-one maybe. And then the two brothers who died, and then five girls. We are all living.

JR: Right before we started recording the interview, you were telling me about a brother of yours that—the oldest brother who died at a young age . . .

HK: Well, he was older. Because he had come from Japan—I think he must have been about nine years old, and he had to start school. (After attending grammar school in Kona, the family sent him to Honolulu to attend McKinley High School. He boarded at Okumura Boarding Home. Reverend [*Takie*] Okumura of Makiki [*Japanese*] Christian Church ran a boarding home so that boys and girls from the outer islands could attend a Honolulu high school. After high school, my brother attended College of Hawai`i for two years. He studied sugar technology.) Then he worked about two years at Koloa (Plantation as a chemist). (My father then asked him to return home, which he did. When he came back, he then enrolled in the College of Hawai`i as a junior. In his senior year, he was injured in a football game.) He died on November 3, 1917, (at the home of David Crawford, coach of the football team).

JR: He was playing football for the university?

HK: Well, at that time they used to call it College of Hawai`i. And the boys played with the high school team, like Punahou [*School*]. I think they were playing with the Punahou football team, because this was the only college.

JR: What was your brother's name.

HK: Maruichi. He was born January 1. I forgot the exact (year).

JR: He was playing on the football team and hurt himself or someone hurt him?

HK: Yeah. He had a cervical fracture, and so he died right away, I think. I remember on that day the youngsters were at Japanese[-language] school. They were having what they call—it's really *kabuki*. And we all went. My mother would fix up some *bento* or lunch, and we would all go there and sit down (on the ground in a measured space, about a yard square for each family). I think that was it, or a school program. And when we came home that evening, lo and behold, the house was completely changed. My parents are Buddhists, so as soon as, I think, the death was notified, they brought the shrine out. They had it on the floor. Because we didn't have beds or furniture at that time, we all sat on the floor. When we came home, all this commotion. And we were told that my brother had been killed in the football game. The body must have gone to the mortuary, I don't know. The neighbors were all there. It was in the evening, you know. So that's how we knew that my brother had died.

JR: Maybe you could describe the house for me in more detail, because you said it was right next to the blacksmith shop.

HK: It was an old house. You know, in those days they didn't have divisions. We had a house on one side—well, the house and the blacksmith shop is all under one roof, and it was divided. One part was a blacksmith shop, and then the next part was our living area. And I remember the living area had a big room where at night we would get all of our *futon*, line them up on the floor, and we all slept.

JR: The whole family.

HK: Yeah. And one area would be sort of like a living room. And if there was overflow, we would even sleep there.

(Laughter)

HK: And we had a little porch. And then separated from the main house was a kitchen. We had a sink and table and everything, so we would go over there (for our meals). And I think it was even dirt floor in those days.

JR: Oh yeah?

HK: And then around the kitchen we had the Japanese *furo*—you know, the bathhouse—and around that we had the toilet. That was the extent of our bathroom facility. And we had to burn the wood. You know, we had the redwood tub—wooden tub—and we would burn [*wood to heat the water*]. Then, on the redwood bathtub, we had a frame so we won't burn ourselves. So that when we got into it, there was this sort of latticework frame so we could sit down. And then there was an area where we washed ourselves. Usually when you go into Japanese bath you don't—you know, we soap ourselves outside and then rinse ourselves and then go into the hot tub and just soak in there.

JR: Was there a line every night of the kids waiting to take their bath?

HK: No, we just went in whenever we were ready to go ahead. That was kind of our bath facilities we had. In the back area we had the grapevine, I remember. And then in the back we also had a stream, and we used to once in a while catch the shrimps. They call it '*opae*. And on the other end by our blacksmith shop, I think it was just an open area. And then there was a lane that went to our neighbors.

JR: What kind of neighbors did you have?

HK: Mostly Japanese. And on the other side there was this huge Chinese vegetable garden, so the Chinese lived there. And they had a long house right on the street. I suppose each man had a room, and I don't recall about the kitchen. But at night they would come out and sit on the porch and eat their food. (Laughs) That I remember.

JR: Were there other businesses? Like you mentioned your father had the blacksmith shop, were there other small . . .

HK: Yeah. The corner across the street was the store.

JR: Like a market?

HK: A grocery store, small grocery store. And that was the only grocery store. And down King Street—which is two blocks down—there was another grocery store. That is at the corner of McCully and King [*streets*], where there is the McCully Chop Sui now, yeah. That wasn't there. But there was a store where the City Bank is now. That used to be the store we used to go in, Chinese store. That I recall. And other area was mostly homes.

JR: Now it's kind of a busy intersection.

HK: Yeah, it is a busy intersection, with the bank, [*McCully*] Chop Sui, and I see the Japanese people are now remodeling the corner. That used to be a

drugstore. Oh yes, I think there was a drugstore long ago. And that's where during World War II a bomb is supposed to have fallen there.

JR: That's right. I've read about that. [*It was later determined that the damage was caused by anti-aircraft fire on December 7, 1941.*]

HK: And then on Beretania Street were mostly homes people lived in, as far as I could remember.

JR: Was it a busy intersection back then?

HK: Yeah, because that was a thoroughfare—Beretania and King Street. Young Street wasn't too heavy traffic area. But Beretania, of course, because that was a main thoroughfare to go from one way to the other, and King Street met [*Beretania Street*] near University Avenue. I think it was there. But all where the University Avenue [*and Beretania Street intersect today*], there was nothing. There was a dairy, if I remember, up there. Mr. [*Thz Fo*] Farm had a dairy. And then we had a doctor who had a beautiful home. I don't know whether that was at the end of University Avenue or further down. He had a huge house there. And there was another prominent Japanese-Hawaiian (family). The wife was a Hawaiian—the Matsumoto family—and (the children) were part-Hawaiian. And I think she must have been one of the wealthy Hawaiians married to this Mr. Matsumoto, a Japanese. And they had a lovely home, as I see it. And Mr. Matsumoto was very active in the Japanese[-language] school. You know where the Mo`ili`ili Community [Center] is? That used to be our Japanese school that we attended.

JR: You went there after your regular school?

HK: Yes. It was interesting. From St. Mary's [*Mission School*] we would go home, and my mother would always have some sweet potatoes or soybeans. When I think about it, (my parents were aware of good snacks). Because in Hiroshima, [*Japan*], sweet potato is quite popular. She would buy a bagful—100-pound bags of sweet potato—and she would have the sweet potato ready for us as a snack. Then we would go to Japanese school. (Laughs) Or soybean, you know, because they used to sell the whole branch of beans, instead of the way they do it now. And then my mother would, I suppose, peel them off (the branch) and cook it. (We ate the beans as we walked to) Japanese school. We learned to speak Japanese, but I've forgotten everything now.

JR: Oh you have?

HK: Oh yeah.

JR: Did your parents speak English?

HK: No, no. We had to speak Japanese (at home to our parents). And I'm always grateful, my mother always used to say as we grew older, "When you are speaking Japanese to anyone, if you cannot speak properly, don't open your mouth. That way you don't embarrass yourself." You know, just nod, (laughs) and they think you understand.

JR: You mentioned the school you went to, St. Mary's.

HK: Yeah. See, after I (finished) third grade, we had to leave. Because that was the extent of school. It was the end of schoolwork, the third grade.

JR: St. Mary's went from . . .

HK: I went to [*Territorial*] Normal [*and*] Training School.

JR: Oh, so St. Mary's was kindergarten or first, second, third?

HK: Third. I stayed there from kindergarten up (through) third grade. And then we had to get out of there. We were going to Ka`ahumanu [*School*]. Are you familiar with where Safeway is [*on Beretania Street*]?

JR: Yeah.

HK: Yeah. But they wouldn't take (my older sister and I) in. I don't know what the reason was. So we moved on to normal training school, which was a few blocks away. I went there from—oh, they repeated us. We had to go back one grade.

JR: You had to repeat third grade.

HK: (Yes), third grade. From third grade up to eighth, and I graduated from normal training school in eighth grade. And then I went to McKinley [*High School*] for four years, from '24 to '28.

JR: Okay. You graduated in 1928.

HK: Twenty-eight. And then I went to St. Luke's Hospital in San Francisco, and I stayed there. At the time, most nurses' schools would be three years, but ours was only twenty-eight months. So after I finished St. Luke's, I went to Children's Hospital for postgraduate.

JR: In San Francisco.

HK: In San Francisco, for another eight months.

JR: Okay.

HK: I have a three-year diploma. I thought eventually they may say, "You don't have enough education," so I'd be prepared for a three-year course.

JR: I'm going to back you up just a little. I wanted to find out a little bit more about the different schools that you attended. St. Mary's, where was that and what kind of a school, what size of a school . . .

HK: Well, St. Mary's, you call it a parochial school. We didn't pay anything. See, it was a mission school, because there was Miss Sara Chung and Miss [*Hilda*] van Deerlin, who were the people—sort of missionaries—who came there and taught the children. We had children in the neighborhood—mostly Orientals, as I remember. Our whole family started there and then divided to different schools.

JR: Was it Catholic school?

HK: No, Episcopal. St. Mary's is an Episcopal church. Both of them were Episcopalians. And unfortunately, Miss Chung was getting off the bus, and she walked in front of the bus and a car came and killed her. That's a bad thing for anyone to do. Hilda van Deerlin was the older person, so she brought her sister, Miss Margaret van Deerlin, from the Mainland. They're from San Francisco, a well-known family there in the Episcopal church. So Miss Margaret came and carried on. And I don't know who else came after that. They had some older people, maybe high school students, who stayed at the dormitory too, and I suppose they helped.

JR: They had a dormitory there for people who lived neighbor island?

HK: No, these were the orphans. The Hawaiian---well, it wasn't only Hawaiian. Anyone who was an orphan and had no home, they would take them in.

JR: Okay.

HK: It was a good boarding home. (When I was a public health nurse), I was asked to be on their board [*of directors*] once. (Authorities) said that dormitories were not the best, (that children) should go into foster homes, so they closed St. Mary's. And I always felt that sometimes dormitories are much better than some of the foster homes you find. But they had to discontinue because the government said close up all boarding homes. They continued with the mission work, and eventually they had a priest (assigned to the church), so it became a parish. In the beginning it's usually mission, because it has to be supported by the diocese, and then when they have enough people in the church and they pledge enough and can pay for the priest, then it becomes a parish. But St. Mary's was always a mission for a long time, as far as I know. I left St. Mary's when we moved to (Kaimuki). (Then I attended) St. Mark's, which was also mission. We didn't have a priest for a while until we became a parish. And I went to the Mainland from St.

Mark's. And anything else you want to ask?

JR: What did the school look like? It had dormitories . . .

HK: At St. Mary's?

JR: Yeah.

HK: No, I think the first level of the building was the classrooms. And of course, it was a classroom with many groups. You know, not first grade, second grade separate. They had to be all combined. And they were not only children who were in the dormitory, but outside children.

JR: Like yourself.

HK: Yeah. And my sister and I—and I think my brothers also went there if I remember.

JR: Why do you think your parents chose that school?

HK: Well, because it was close.

(Laughter)

HK: See, we lived on McCully, and St. Mary's is not too far away. And then it was on the way to Japanese school. Convenient. And Kuhio School became the first public school. You know where Kuhio School is? It's further up.

JR: Okay, I see.

HK: When we moved here (to Kaimuki), my (younger) sisters went to Kuhio School, except one of them went to – yeah, she went to Kuhio and then went to [St. Andrew's] Priory later on.

JR: So from St. Mary's, you went to . . .

HK: Normal training school.

JR: That's where they were teaching people to become teachers.

HK: Yeah. Just like your. . . . What do they call it at the university?

JR: Lab school.

HK: It's equivalent to the lab school, where the student teachers come and teach us.

JR: How did you like that?

HK: Well, at that time, we thought—the teachers had pigtails like we did. They were no different, especially in third grade. But by the time we got into fifth grade, they had teachers who were more mature looking. And then when we became seventh grade, they had what they call collegiate teachers. They were freshmen at the university.

JR: So the younger the student, the younger the teacher basically?

HK: No, at that time I think they must have had all high school students teaching. But I remember, in third grade we had (a younger student teacher). And as time went on, I suppose they were able to get better students to come in, maybe juniors and maybe seniors. And then when I became seventh grade, I think that's when they set the policy of having collegiate teachers. They were university freshmen. And they were more or less the elites, as I remember, people who were well known, like Mapuana Peters, who was a judge's daughter, and a few others.

JR: Those are your teachers?

HK: Miss *[Lucy] Thurston*, *[who later became]* Mrs. Blaisdell—oh, she passed away—*[Mayor]* Neal Blaisdell's wife. So we had higher-grade teachers.

JR: How big were the classes?

HK: Well, regular, maybe twenty-five or thirty, because it was a classroom, ordinary classroom. And being a lab school, they probably wouldn't crowd them up so much.

JR: What kind of students were there?

HK: All mixed, yeah. Even when I graduated, we were all a mixed group. I suppose there were students from the neighborhood mostly. Because I remember a Korean classmate of mine who lived right next door *[going]* to the normal school. See, that area used to be Portuguese area.

JR: Oh, it was?

HK: Yeah. That used to be the Portuguese town. All the Portuguese lived in that Punchbowl area.

JR: Where exactly was the school?

HK: Do you know the retirement home up on Lunalilo Street? That was the first retirement home they built for low-income people. That used to be the normal school. And when they *[merged Territorial Normal and Training*

*School with the University of Hawai`i in 1931], they built this retirement home. It's changed quite a bit, because they have condominiums and apartments. But the whole area was a Portuguese community. You know, in Hawai`i we had—like in Manoa it's all *Haole*. No Orientals could move there. Then here, I think, was kind of mixed when we moved.*

JR: Kaimuki.

HK: Yeah. And Waikiki was mostly *Haoles*. Manoa was definitely *Haoles*.

(Laughter)

HK: When we worked there, we worked there as maids. But now it's all mixed up. But when you grow up without. . . . They live there. It's okay, they're rich. You don't have the feeling like so many of them had, the prejudice and the bitter feeling. Thank goodness I didn't grow up with that feeling, like the people who are in plantation. I have friends who are professional people and who grew up in the plantation, and they still carry that resentment. You know, because probably they were put in the specific Japanese section, Filipino section, and so on. But with us, we used to have all kinds of people—especially in our shop, my father's blacksmith shop, we used to have all nationalities come in to have their horse shoed and wheels fixed. And then going to St. Mary's, where we had a mixture. I noticed even when I went to the Mainland, you didn't have that prejudice. You didn't feel that so many other people felt. . . . So I'm glad that I grew up where I did.

JR: I think you said the lab school, though, only went to eighth grade.

HK: Yeah, eighth grade. And that's why we had to go to McKinley. That was the only high school in town at the time. Because we didn't have Roosevelt, we didn't have—what other schools are there? We didn't have Farrington. Everybody came to McKinley. And then when Roosevelt came on, it became an English-speaking school.

JR: Yeah, English standard school.

HK: Yeah. You heard about that?

JR: Yeah, yeah. But that was after your time.

HK: Oh, way after my time. I had a niece who was on Maui, and she always used to say, "I'm going to the English standard school," which is bad, you know.

JR: Yeah, it's bragging.

HK: Bragging.

(Laughter)

JR: How did you get to McKinley from Kaimuki?

HK: Oh, we walked usually, or got on the bus, on the trolley.

JR: Sometimes you would walk though.

HK: Yeah. It's not that far, you know, when you think of it. It's only about three miles, from here to McKinley. Sometimes I used to come home from St. Andrew's to my home, which is about four miles. But I'm sure we walked or took the trolley, because it was, what, only five cents. Of course, five cents was quite a bit. We used to buy the tofu, I think one square used to be five cents. Now it's about \$1.89.

JR: Yes.

HK: Oh, it's terrible.

JR: Why did the family move from the . . .

HK: Oh, because that used to be a leased land. It must have been a Bishop Estate lease land. And the lease was finished, so we had to get out. And my father had a piece of property up on Eighth Avenue, a small piece of property. And we had a very dear Chinese friend named Mr. Farm. He started the Ho-Min Ice Cream [*Company*]. He had a dairy near the university, and my father and my oldest brother used to help him with the cattle. And he was such a kind Christian. When we had to move from there, he said that he had a property here, that for us to sell the other property and buy this. And this was a one-acre property—pile of rocks, nothing but rocks—and for one cent a square foot. So he was able to buy this land for one thousand dollars. That was a lot of money in those days. And Kaimuki Avenue was just—it wasn't even a path, just a pile of rocks.

JR: Oh yeah?

HK: When we first moved here.

JR: Were there any other houses around?

HK: Well, I think there---I don't remember this house. But eventually houses came on. So my father built a small house here, and we lived in that small house.

JR: Is this part of that same house, or is it . . .

HK: See, this whole area belonged to us—one acre, which has ten lots. And Japanese-style, they give all the property to the boys. My oldest brother—

who lives there now—got six lots, and my second brother got two lots, my third brother got two lots. In 1950, my brother was going to get married. He didn't get married until quite late. And (my mother) always used to say, "Never interfere with the in-laws. Get out of the house." So I asked my brother if he would let me buy a portion of his land. He handed me his deed, so I went out and got it divided. I got this lot and gave back whatever was left over.

And then I decided to build a house. I used to hear people say, "Oh, when you're building a house, you're going to have all kinds of trouble. Husbands and wives fight about this—we want this, we want that." And then, I hated to be cheated. So what I did was to take a course in planning your home, one course at the university by Mr. Whitaker. He was an architect and an artist. And then that was, oh, very high-falutin homes.

And someone said to me, "Harriet, if you're going to build a home, go to McKinley. There's a Mr. Lemmon who teaches a course at McKinley." You paid one dollar for a night class, so I took the course. And he was very functional. And he started off systematically, you know, how we're going to plan to build. And he was wonderful. He even brought the banker in to talk to us about loans. He even brought the Lewers & Cooke lumber person, so that we would know what kind of material we needed and so forth. And he invited us to his home to see what kind of home he had built. And then, when it was all over, I asked him if he would be my architect. He was so delighted. He knew us from the class. So he came over and helped me out, and that's how I built my home.

JR: So he designed this home we're sitting in right now.

HK: Yeah. Well, before our class was over we (made a building) plan according to our land area. And this was something I had, so he knew what I was planning (when) he came. And (my) having taken the course was wonderful, because you know you cannot add on without further cost. You have to be sure what you want. And he used to stress that. Many people would say, "Oh, I want this changed, I want that changed."

He planned it so well in our class. "When you're building a home, how are you going to live? Are you going to live in a big house with a dining room? Are you going to entertain a lot? If you're going to work all day, you can't have time to entertain." And all these little details, so that you can see that you only put in whatever you want.

And I said, "I'm going to die in my house, so I have to think in terms of in case I have cancer and chronic disease, I want to be able to look out, not go in the nursing home." (Chuckles)

JR: Oh, thinking ahead.

HK: Yeah. He helps you to think ahead. He said, "Are you building for a resale? Are you building for permanent? And are you going to build to extend in case you marry. And then (are) you going to have children? You have to plan whether you're going to have extra bathrooms, bedrooms." You have to plan your house accordingly, so it wouldn't be that expensive. And it really helps you, you know. I feel now you can't do that, because they're so sloppy in their building. You know, you can't have the fine things in the house. And so when he planned it, we went over it and he put in anything I felt I needed. So I'm satisfied, although sometimes the doors get too heavy.

(Laughter)

HK: See, what I was planning . . .

JR: These sliding wooden and glass doors.

HK: Yeah. And then my patio—of course, it's a junk pile now, but that's where I'm going to have all kinds of plants. And when I was younger I could entertain people in the patio and everything, so it was really wonderful. And it was so cheap when you think of it. I learned all about bidding. He would get all the contractors together. I went to wherever they were. I think it was to his office. And it was all blind bid. And (between) the lowest and the next was a difference of five dollars. Some were way (off), \$3,000 or more. Maybe they didn't want it. So we took the lowest bid. And the total came out to only \$18,000. Can you imagine? This included the architect's fee.

JR: What year was the house built?

HK: Nineteen fifty-two.

JR: Fifty-two.

HK: It'll be forty years now. And I told him I didn't want to be a slave to my house. And the reason---people say, "Why do you have that high windows there?" Well, there was an empty lot (next door). See, I didn't want to be looking at the empty lot. And I don't want to be bothered with drapes, even though the windows are pretty dirty. So that way, you know, you don't have to do much work. And then I had bare floor, because it's easier to vacuum and mop, instead of rugs. (Chuckles)

JR: The house that was here before, that house that your father built . . .

HK: Yeah. (It) was further down, because, you see, we had a lot of space.

JR: So you had the whole acre to yourself.

HK: No, no, no.

JR: At that time.

HK: Five thousand square foot. That acre was divided into ten lots. I have one of the ten lots.

JR: But before, when you first moved here.

HK: No, no. I had to get the five thousand, because that had to come under my name to register at wherever you register your property.

JR: But when you were children and your family first moved here . . .

HK: Oh yeah, we just had the one house. We had a dairy here.

JR: On the same property?

HK: Yeah, in the acre. My brothers used to milk the cow, and we (would deliver the milk to neighbors who had ordered it).

JR: Oh, so it was like a little business that you had.

HK: Yeah, a business.

JR: What happened with the blacksmith shop?

HK: Oh, once we moved (to Kaimuk\_), we couldn't have the blacksmith shop here. But we brought some things over—you know, like the anvil. And we used to work in the blacksmith shop. Well, everybody had to work.

JR: All the children?

HK: Yeah. I remember working. And (once) I fell down (while blowing the bellows), and there was a nail sticking out, and I got the nail in my knee.

JR: That must have hurt.

HK: Well, it didn't. It was rusty, so I remember pouring a whole pint of hydrogen peroxide—you know, seeing the bubbles coming out. I didn't get any infection. But we all had to help. My brothers did most of the heavy work.

JR: Was it just your father and then whatever children helped? No other people?

HK: Yeah, no outsiders. He did all the shoeing of the horses, because that's what (he) did. See, with the shoe, they have to heat it up and hammer it to fit the hoof. Now when I see a blacksmith, (as I did) when I visited the Mainland, it

(brings back memories). There aren't too many blacksmiths. Even here (there are not) very many. (But there must be) some, because (there are) horses that have (to be shoed).

JR: Brings back memories, when you . . .

HK: Yeah, yeah. It's interesting.

JR: So you had a dairy here afterwards?

HK: Yeah, we had a big area down below, being an acre of land. We had a pasture—I don't know how many cows we had—and we had a milk shed. And inspectors used to come from the health department to take some samples to be sure we were within the regulation. And then gradually, I suppose, we got rid of the cattle, especially when we grew up and were doing our own work, like when my brother went to work at the university and others started working.

JR: I'm going to stop for a second to turn the tape over, okay?

HK: See, I was working for this family, a White family.

JR: As a maid.

HK: As a maid, during the summer. And (the family was) invited by (another) family on Moloka`i. And so I had the privilege of going with them (to Moloka`i). We went on S.S. *Likelike*, in the middle of the night. And then when we got to Kaunakakai, the boat—or the ship, whatever you call it—couldn't get to the pier, so we had to get on a little boat.

JR: Like a rowboat or something.

HK: Rowboat. And then we were brought in to the pier. And then from there we had to travel quite a distance to the home we were going, in the middle of the night on a T-model [*Model-T*] Ford.

(Laughter)

HK: See, there was a mother and two children and myself—four of us—in this T-model Ford. And we finally got to this place. I was trying to think the name of this family. The wife was a daughter of Governor [*Charles*] McCarthy. But I don't know what her married name was. They had a dairy in Moloka`i. And then, being a maid and all, they had their own people, so I didn't have to do much but be like the kids. And we used to go crabbing and do all kinds of things that I had never done, you know, never had the experience. I don't know how long we were there. Then we came back (to Honolulu) on the [S.S.] *Likelike* again.

And every summer I worked for this family. They were Mr. and Mrs. Scott. Mrs. [Elizabeth] Scott was from Australia. Mr. [Ralph] Scott was from New Zealand, and he was head of the Bishop Insurance [Agency] here. They're both gone (now). And the children were John and Joy Scott. And I'm trying to figure out whether John died. And Joy, I don't know where she is. I was asking someone who grew up with them whether they remember her, but they don't know if she's still. . . . I'd like to see them. You know, they'd be quite—oh, much younger than I am. And I worked for this family every summer from that time on until I left for San Francisco.

JR: This was starting about—what age were you when you started?

HK: I think I was about thirteen. And it was a great experience for me. Because our home was Japanese—sleeping on the floor, no furniture and all. Whereas when I went to the home, she taught me how to clean the house properly. Coming from those areas [*i.e., Australia and New Zealand*], they were very proper, you know, with the silver and all. I learned to polish the silver, set the table, and I think I had to do some laundry too. I always am very grateful to having worked there to learn the American way of living. That way, it was an educational period for me to be in the home. I would go early in the morning to Waik\_k\_.

JR: That's where they lived?

HK: Yeah, on Saratoga Road.

JR: They had a home?

HK: Yeah. They were renting the house, I think, at the time. Only during the summer. But during the school year, if they were going out they would ask me to come and baby-sit. I would go and baby-sit, and that was my extra money. (I) got paid five dollars a week (during the summer). Oh, that was big money. Twenty dollars a month, you know.

JR: And you would live with them?

HK: No, no. I would come home. I don't think I lived there. Then they built a beautiful home up in Woodlawn. And at that time, there were, oh, very few homes up on Woodlawn [*in Manoa*]. And so I would go there during the summer months. But I stayed there, because it was such a long ways from there to my home. I would come home for weekends, and early Monday morning I would go there. And when they wanted me to baby-sit, I would go up there, spend the night, and they would bring me to school, McKinley High School. And they always gave me a nice lunch. (Laughs) That's a big help, you know. They were so wonderful.

JR: Do you remember how you found that job?

HK: Oh, my sister. My oldest sister was a maid, lived and worked for a family in Waikiki. And Mrs. Scott was looking for someone. And so I stayed with them during the summer. I didn't feel I should work during the week, school days. And they managed somehow. I think they had someone come in and do the housework or something. But they wanted me to take care of the children. And they were such lovely children. John was such a brilliant boy, and he was one boy who could read. He would be reading, and he would finish the page. I said, "John, do you know what you're reading?"

He'd say, "Yeah."

"Tell me." He would know. He was such a prolific reader, young age. And when they built this big home up on Woodlawn, I went there, stayed there during the summer. And there I learned a lot more how to clean a big house. (Chuckles) And I always am grateful to them for having taught me all that cleaning house, taking care of the silverware, setting the table, so that you learned the nice things of living.

JR: That can be hard work though.

HK: No, she always helped too. And I was enjoying the work, so it really wasn't. You know, whenever you're enjoying doing anything, it's fun. That's the way I always felt, that I was really going to school, learning all these things which I never knew in my home.

JR: Did you have to wear a uniform or anything?

HK: No, no, just ordinary clothes. And then they always took me whenever they went to the beach. I was part of the family. Especially when they lived in Waikiki, John, Joy, and I would go to the beach in the afternoons. And then when she moved up to Manoa, well the family would go to Ulunui [Woman's Swimming] Clubhouse. I think a group of women had bought the house. It's gone now, but I don't know where it used to be. It was near Outrigger Canoe Club. And they had their own kitchen, and there was someone who was always there to take care of the place. And many, many families went there. It was a nice gathering place, and I used to swim in front of Outrigger. So it was a very pleasant experience, and getting five dollars a week. (Chuckles)

JR: Now, did you give that to your family to help them?

HK: Well, I think I saved it. They said keep it so that I could save it, you know, for my trip to the Mainland and so on. And we didn't have too much, but when you have your vegetables growing and chickens and what have you, you can manage. And then we sewed our own clothes, and we had one or two dresses.

(Laughter)

HK: We managed. And then when I baby-sat, they would pay me a dollar a night. And that was a godsend.

JR: I wanted to ask you about something. When I first met you, I commented on the fact that you sounded to me like a *Haole* person, the way you speak. And you said, "Oh, other people have told me that." I was trying to figure out how you came to talk—because really, you grew up here, your parents were Japanese, they spoke Japanese.

HK: Yeah. You think I speak different?

JR: Yeah, you don't sound . . .

HK: Oriental.

JR: Yeah, you don't sound local.

HK: I don't think anything about it. When people comment, I say, "Well, I'm speaking the way I always did."

JR: But other people tell you that though?

HK: Yeah, even the director of nurses. She says, "Are you sure you are from here?"

I said, "Yes, I was born in the country in Kona."

And she commented that I speak—I don't know, because I can't hear my own voice—differently. And it is true some of our local people speak. . . . What is it? Is it the mixing of the language, the Hawaiian and all?

JR: Yeah. It's probably the influence of—the pidgin, you know?

HK: Yeah, I have never spoken pidgin. I'm wondering sometimes, having gone to school and then working with a *Haole* family during the summer months . . .

JR: That's what I was thinking.

HK: Yeah. Because those children spoke good English, and they both went to Punahou School. I'm surprised when people say that. But once, after I went to the university, taking courses to get my degree, I was called in by whoever was interested in English. She called me in and said, "I want to talk to you. You have not taken English 1. All Japanese students must take."

I was already a professional nurse. I said, "Well, no one told me that I must take this course."

And after she listened to me talking and [*heard*] that I was already a public health nurse she said, "Oh, in your case probably we can drop that."

And I thought, boy, boy, these people. See, because all Japanese—I think only Japanese students, I don't know whether it's all racial groups—had to take this extra course in English before they could take anything. Discrimination.

JR: Yeah.

HK: I never thought about it. But if she said I had to take it, I would say, "Keep it. I'm not going to your university." Because I have even done that with—when I went back to get my degree, they said I had to have eight credits in science. I had to take eight credits in chemistry—four for one semester, second semester four [*more*]. I said, "Mr. Kelly, I'm a professional nurse. What do I need chemistry for?" I said, "I flunked chemistry when I was in high school. I passed chemistry when I was in nursing school. I see no rhyme or reason for me to take chemistry now." Thank goodness they didn't have Chemistry 1 in first semester. See, I was going to be a sort of full-time student.

He thought, and he said, "Well, we'll substitute the science." He said, "What about taking two credits in bacteriology, two credits in botany, four credits in nutrition?"

I said, "Those would be wonderful." Because bacteriology, I can take back to what I'm doing. And botany, I can learn more about plants. And nutrition, this was advanced nutrition they were planning for the dieticians' course. I had already had a nutrition course for public health nursing. I said, "Oh, that'd be just perfect." So that's what I did.

To me, sometimes you have to speak up, especially when you are an older person. They shove these things which (are) not going to do you a bit of good. And with bacteriology, I was able to go back to our clinic—when I was doing the VD [*venereal disease*] work—and do gonorrhea smears right in the clinic, because I learned how to stain and everything. We told the doctor, I said, "I think we can do that smear test right here." We had microscopes and everything. "We can tell the patient whether we found the gonococcus on the smear or not." I was able to utilize that right then and there. I got my way, didn't have to . . .

JR: Yeah, didn't have to do the chemistry or the English.

HK: Yeah, isn't that something? I don't know whether they still . . .

JR: I've heard people talk about how the university did things like that—in terms of their English admittance—you know, to local students.

HK: And see, I was already, what, in my twenties at the time, already working. They had no idea, I suppose. They saw my name and thought, "Racial extraction Japanese, I better call her in." (Laughs) Quite an experience. If I didn't speak up, they would put me in the class, waste more of my time.

JR: I just wanted to finish up with your high school years before we get into your higher education. You then went to McKinley, yeah?

HK: Yeah, McKinley. And I took what they call a collegiate course, you know, where you have to have language. I had three years of Latin and one year of French. And then, chemistry I flunked. Biology, I don't know what else. And English, of course. We had four years of English, I think.

JR: Did you know what you wanted to do once you graduated?

HK: Yeah, before that. I used to work in the first-aid station at the school.

JR: At McKinley?

HK: At McKinley. I was a Girl Scout, and we had a first-aid course. That was sort of extracurricular activity. I worked in the first-aid station. And then I decided that probably nursing would be (a chance to go to the Mainland). I didn't want to go to the university. I hated to write book reports. And then, because I was Episcopalian—and Rose Yap, who was my classmate, she was going (there), so we decided to go (together). There was four of us Episcopalians who went there.

JR: You know that first-aid station you mentioned, what was that?

HK: Oh, when students came in, we had to take their temperature. When they said they were sick, we had to take their temperature. Because I had taken first-aid in Girl Scouting too, so I was able to. I knew that much, taking temperature and all that kind of thing. And we had a wonderful teacher who was (our first-aid instructor).

JR: So from an early age, then, you knew you wanted to go into nursing.

HK: Yeah. And there was no one in my family who went into nursing. And none of us---oh, I had a tonsillectomy when I was in high school. And the doctor did the tonsillectomy in the office, and then he took me to the hospital. I spent the night there. And when I was in the hospital, they didn't tell me to stay in bed. I would go to the bathroom, and (when) the nurse (saw me out of bed, she said), "What are you doing?"

"Oh, I have to go to the bathroom."

She said, "You're supposed to stay in bed and put the ice cap on." Such a ridiculous thing.

(Laughter)

HK: I must have been a belligerent child.

(Laughter)

JR: Strong willed.

HK: Next day I came home. That was my only hospital experience. And none of us in our family had any hospital experience, except that (one night) I was in the hospital.

JR: Why is it, do you think, that you wanted to be a nurse?

HK: Well, I think I enjoyed working with the students coming in—taking their temperature and helping them out. And then, I don't know, I just felt for the people, you know, caring.

JR: What were your options, I guess, is what I'm wondering. For a woman of your age at that time . . .

HK: Well, to go to the university. But I didn't like that, writing a book report about . . . (Laughs) They say, "Oh, you have to write a book report." I used to just detest that.

I was taking courses (at the University of Hawai`i) piecemeal, except in the last year. They said I had to be a full-time student, at least with twelve credits. So what I did was to split my vacation, and I would work and go to the school on vacation time. I was given permission to do that. I was still getting my salary. And that way I gave more to the government, because I would come back and work and work [*at the Department of Health*]. And that's how I was able to finish. And because I had courses from the University of Pennsylvania and all of that, by the time I asked them to evaluate my credits I had more than enough. But I didn't have the required courses. Because during the war, I think many of us went to the university to take night courses with everybody. And I remember taking international government, where we studied the Constitution, new constitutions of the Philippines, of Japan, everyplace, and different courses they were offering. I just took anything that I thought would be interesting. And if I wanted to audit, I'd audit. If I felt I'd take it for credit, I'd take it for credit. I had quite a bit piled up, but I didn't have the requirement, so I had to go back and get that.

JR: You just like to learn.

HK: Yeah, something that I could use in my work and for enjoyment. And I found the international government very interesting, because that was right after the war years [*i.e. World War II*]. And then [*there were*] older people in the class, so the discussion was very interesting. Instead of being with a bunch of young students. I forgot all the courses that I took. Another nurse and I would go up there. And I finally got my degree—bachelor of science in nursing—in 1949, long time later. I marched in the procession, and my neighbors came and gave me beautiful leis. Proud moment.

JR: You know, you just mentioned something that I wanted to follow up on—and it kind of breaks the chronology, but that's okay—the Girl Scouts.

HK: Yeah.

JR: You were a Girl Scout when you were young.

HK: Yeah, from St. Mary's. And then when I went to St. Mark's, I joined the troop there, because it was closer. And then I was ready for the Golden Eaglet badge. I became a sort of—what do they call it—first lieutenant or something, kind of leader in the Girl Scouts. And when I went to the Mainland to nursing school, I found out they had a Girl Scout camp at Santa Cruz. The last summer I was in training, I took my two weeks' vacation to go to Santa Cruz camp for Girl Scouts. And there they had no tents. Everyone had to live out in the woods. And I was a loner, stray person, because I didn't belong to any troops by then. They said, "You go and look for your bed someplace." So what I did was to get all the leaves together and rented a blanket and slept there. And they said there were snakes and what have you.

(Laughter)

HK: And the only building that they had was (where) food (was kept). And all the Girl Scout (groups) there had their own little area. Between the pine trees and what have you, they made their sort of nest. And then there was a huge redwood tree with the inside burned out, and that was the office.

JR: Oh, interesting.

HK: Yeah, it was very. I was so glad that I went there. And then I met the daughter of the Girl Scout commissioner of San Francisco. She and I were Mutt and Jeff. And we all had to pick up an animal or insect name, so I became Scorpion. They never called you by your own name, you were just called by your insect (name). What was she? I forgot what she was. And she was almost a six-footer. She and I were loners.

JR: She was Giraffe or something.

HK: Yeah. (She was Lizard.) And we would go out on hikes. It was wonderful experience, because here (in Honolulu) I didn't participate too much in camp life because I was working during the summer months. When we had weekend camps or so, I would go out. And in my early days, the Episcopal church had a house in Kohala, a bungalow where they could use for Girl Scout camp. And we pitched a tent on the grounds and cooked. And I don't know where that property is now. They must have sold it. It's too bad.

JR: What other activities did you do when you were a youngster, as a Girl Scout? You couldn't go camping.

HK: Yeah, we didn't do too much. I couldn't go camping, but at Kohala—we used to go quite frequently there. That was our campsite, being part of the Episcopal church. And we had, I remember, a kerosene stove. And when I was in the eighth grade at normal training school, when we'd go to the kitchen we would learn how to cook. And they taught us how to make cream puff. So I said I'm going to bake cream puff at the camp. I mix it all up, but I didn't realize the kerosene stove doesn't get too hot.

(Laughter)

HK: So the cream puff never puffed.

JR: A little hard.

(Laughter)

HK: I remember that. And they all said, "Oh my goodness, your cream puff you can't even eat."

(Laughter)

HK: But camping on the ground, you know, it was just like a real camp. But we had to eat in the building, and we'd go up and down the sand. And now, Kohala is so different.

JR: Oh yeah. Were there other troops?

HK: No, we were the only troop that used to go there. Oh, we used to have a troops' meeting. I remember all the troops would get together like they do now. And I think I mentioned to you about doing our community work by going to the Kalihi Receiving Station, where the leper troop was. You know, once every so many months we were told that it's our turn to go over there and have a group meeting. And (we) would have (ours) jointly (like the others). And after it was all over, then we served refreshments. We would

take refreshments—juice, cookies, and what have you—and then put it on this hibiscus hedge. You know, put a tray there and they would pick it up.

JR: You were on one side and they were on the other?

HK: Yeah, that's right. Because we could not go in, because it was isolation.

JR: So the only contact was . . .

HK: Over the hedge, yeah. And then it wasn't that wide, so we could talk anyway—Pledge of Allegiance and all the different things that we did. And then whatever communication we had to do, it was over the hibiscus hedge.

JR: Were there many girls in the . . .

HK: Yeah. There were, I think, about—as I remember, at least about ten, fifteen girls, because I remember two lines. They would have chairs, and we would have chairs on our side too. They would bring for us. And then the other night when they were showing the leprosy colony . . .

JR: Oh, the TV program. There's a documentary on TV [*on the history of Kalaupapa, the settlement for leprosy patients on Moloka'i*].

HK: Yeah. All the youngsters you see in that, they looked just like that, many of them. Because you don't see (those lesions) anymore, with sulphonomides or whatever they're using now [*to treat the disease*].

JR: You mean the way the disease disfigures?

HK: The nodules, yeah. Did you see them?

JR: In the program?

HK: In the program, yeah. That's the way many of them looked. And it was not a pleasant sight to see, but we didn't think anything of it. The only thing was, I remember when I'd come home I would say, "Gee, I wonder if I caught?"—not knowing, you know, how.

And then my father always used to say, "Don't need to worry. If you put your hand down, and if this part gets all in, then you have it." (Laughs)

JR: What?

HK: And I've been trying to find out why he said that. Well, in many of these people the nerve is gone.

JR: Between the thumb and the forefinger.

HK: Yeah. This part would go in. So every so often I'd put my hand over it and say, "No, it's not in, so I didn't catch it." (Laughs)

JR: If the flesh that connects the thumb and forefinger was . . .

HK: Yeah, atrophied.

JR: Oh, then that meant that you had . . .

HK: He said that's the only way I can tell. Of course, later I learned you have nodules on your earlobes and nostrils and all over.

JR: At that point, though, people really weren't aware of—you just didn't want to touch . . .

HK: Well, we were not allowed to touch. We were instructed that we would have no bodily contact.

JR: Well, what about the juice?

HK: Well, we put it on the fence, and they would pick it up.

JR: But would you take it then when they were through?

HK: No, I think they threw them on their side.

JR: Oh, okay.

HK: There was no direct contact. We were told that whenever we visited them there should be no direct contact. But you don't catch it that easily. You have to live, like Father Damien [*Joseph de Veuster*] did. And when I went to Lahaina, I told you about the cases that we had, we picked up.

JR: When you were a public health nurse in Lahaina.

HK: Yeah. Did I mention to you the first case that I visited?

JR: Maybe you should mention it again, though, so I can get it on the tape.

HK: Well, the first patient I was asked to visit when I became the public health nurse in Lahaina was to notify this lepers patient that he was to come to Honolulu to be shipped to Moloka`i. And when I walked in there, he was really one of those that you see in the picture. He was a full-blown leper patient. And I was concerned. Should I shake my hands with him? Or if he brought his hand out, what should I do? But I prepared myself by keeping both my hands filled up—one with purse and one with the nurse's bag.

JR: So he wouldn't extend his hand.

HK: But they're very careful. I think they're aware. And I explained to him that we are planning his trip to Honolulu.

JR: How did he react?

HK: Well, as I recall, I think he was prepared, because he was so advanced. And the doctor had to see him first, because I was there following the doctor's diagnosis and everything. So he probably knew. It was more fear on my part than anything else.

And it was his son, who was then just a tiny—I imagine he must have been about two—who at age six, when he was in the first grade, developed leprosy. And it was picked up [*noticed*] by the teacher, because I had explained to the teacher. We had a health card, and all the communicable diseases were listed there. It said contact if leprosy, contact if TB, and contact if whatever disease we had. And so the teacher, who was a wonderful *Haole* woman, I explained to her that he is one of the contacts, so we need to observe him. Well, he was out with the measles when he was in the first grade. When he came back, the teacher noticed that he looked flushed. And so when I visited the school, she called my attention to it. When I saw him I noticed how the earlobe was swollen and the nostrils enlarged. So I told the teacher I will take him to the government physician. The principal dismissed him to me, so I took the child to the government physician in my car. And the doctor looked at it. He says, "Definitely very suspicious. Isolate him, he's not to go to school." So I took him home to the mother and explained to him that he could not go to school. And in those days, I don't think we had home teachers. But he was in the home. And eventually he had to be sent to Honolulu to the Kalihi Receiving Station, where the children were placed.

And then the other case which was very interesting—the Hawaiians know when you have leprosy. They've been exposed to it so much. One of the teachers said to me, "Would you please follow up on this student who's been out of school for one month."

I knew he had a brother, so I called the brother to my health room, and I said, "How is your brother?"

He said, "Oh, he's going to Honolulu."

I said, "Oh, what happened?"

"Well, he's not too well." He said, "He's still home, but he's going pretty soon."

So immediately I went to the home. I knew where they lived. When I went to the home, I said, "May I see so-and-so," her son.

She said, "Oh, he went to Honolulu."

I said, "I have talked to your other son, and he said he's still here. He's planning to go, but he hasn't gone. May I see him please?"

She hesitated for a while, and she said, "You won't report him, will you?"

I said, "That I cannot answer, because I haven't seen him."

And so she brought him out, and he did have the nodules. And he lost so much weight. I said, "What have you been doing to him?" Because I used to keep track of students' health record, the weight chart.

And she said, "I've been giving him epsom salt, to clean him up." I think she knew what he had, because the lesions were so obvious. And she said, "Please don't report him."

And I said, "As a nurse, I have to report any communicable disease. I have to report. I'm not going to lie to you." And I didn't tell her what further I was going to do, but I had to report it.

I left her and went to the government physician, and I told him what I had found. He got in my car and we went to the home, which was quite a distance, from Lahaina to Olowalu. And when we got there, they were gone. And we saw what you call a *luna*—plantation *luna*—and we asked him, "Where do you think the family goes if they leave the house?"

(He) said, "They go to Lahaina to the prison house."

See, there is an old prison house right in Lahaina where a family was living, a Hawaiian family. So I drove the doctor to this old prison house, which is right across from Kam[ehameha] III School, where he was a student. And then we went in. And Dr. [William] Dunn was a gruff doctor. He said, "Where is the boy?"

The family got frightened, and finally they brought him out. He looked at him, and he said, "Definitely. He has lesions." We put him in the car and took him to the hospital. And the doctor---he was a plantation physician and government physician. So we took him in, and he took a slide of the secretion from his nostrils. And they looked for Hansen's bacillus. And I don't know whether they found it or not, but he said, "We better isolate him."

And I think I took him back to the prison, but he couldn't go to school anymore. Eventually we had to send him to Honolulu also. And there was a

history of leprosy in that family. And there were quite a number of families with leprosy there. And we used to have a clinic where Dr. [Edwin] Chung-Hoon used to come every so often and conduct a clinic. We would arrange for the contacts to come to a certain location so he could examine them. And he was the most wonderful doctor I have ever worked with. He was so sensitive to the patients. You know, (when) he was examining a young girl before puberty, he would say to me, "Please cover her well. Don't expose her." He was so wonderful. You don't find that kind of doctor.

JR: He was a Honolulu doctor who came over there?

HK: Yeah. Dr. Chung-Hoon was a specialist in leprosy, and he used to come. He was a private practitioner also. And he came to the [neighbor] islands every so often to conduct a clinic. I always enjoyed working with him because he was so wonderful, so sensitive of patients. And they all adored him. He was a good-looking young man. And his whole family was that way. I met his father —perfect gentleman. I had an occasion to talk to him about someone, and he was such a gentleman. I said, "No wonder his son . . ." And there were other children that I had contact with. It's wonderful when you have a doctor like that to work with.

And then another case that I had—this was most unusual—it was a little girl who had a lesion on her face. And the principal of the school was part-Hawaiian. And she says, "Miss Kuwamoto, I think there's something wrong with that lesion."

And there was a history of leprosy in that family, I knew, so I referred her to the doctor. And the doctor said, "Oh, that's ringworm."

But the teachers were not satisfied, so I went to the home. And I thought I would do the test which Dr. [Newton] Wayson and Dr. Chung-Hoon taught us. And so I went to the home, and I used what they call a pin test. You get a sharp pin and poke there and find out whether they feel it or not. And then do another place, and if they felt it—there's no feeling in the lesion.

JR: Oh, okay.

HK: Another test was a heated spoon—heat. I heated up a spoon and put it on a non-infected area. [The person would] say, "Oh yeah, it's warm." And when I put it up (on the lesion), she didn't feel anything. So I knew there was something there, you know, which was one of the tests we were told to try out. But then rumor went out that, "The nurse poked my daughter with a pin."

(Laughter)

HK: And then the word got out to the Hawaiian community there that the doctor

was not giving the right diagnosis. It went to the father of an assistant doctor, Dr. [James] Fleming. Mr. [David] Fleming was the head of the Lahaina Pineapple [i.e., *Baldwin Packers*]. Finally the son had to do something, so the son came and examined her. Finally they decided, "Very suspicious of Hansen's disease." So we had to isolate her. And that's all she had here.

JR: Was a small mark on her cheek.

HK: Sort of ring, ringworm. But because of the history of the family, they felt something should be followed up. And finally, I think positive diagnosis was established—from that lesion or whatever—so we had to send her to Honolulu. But the teachers know, especially if you let them know these things. Now they say everything has to be confidential. But I feel we should utilize the intelligent teachers. They will keep it confidential. And that way we can all work together. And even when we had syphilis, I put that on the card. Because the card is for the teacher and for me to look at and do whatever work we needed to do.

JR: You know, from visiting Kalaupapa and watching that documentary you were mentioning earlier, it was very traumatic for people to have to be isolated or sent there.

HK: Oh yeah.

JR: That must have made your job difficult.

HK: Yeah, but I think it depends. Like these three cases, I didn't feel that it was difficult if you're honest and explain to them that it's a communicable disease. I always have faith in people. Even with syphilis, they say, "Oh, the people shun you" and this and that. I never felt that way, because I didn't [*shun them*]. I felt that this was a communicable disease which has to be handled as such. And even with tuberculosis. You know, Japanese people are very anti-tuberculosis. And so when I would go into the homes and talk to them—when we had this mass tuberculin testing program from kindergarten through high school, we found many with positive tuberculin. X-rays showed that they had developed minor lesions, so they had to go to Kula [*Sanatorium*]. And even with that, people accepted all what we're doing—I think we must have done a good educational program—that this was a case finding and, when you go to Kula and get proper treatment, you're going to come home and continue on. Because we had several high school students who had to be sent. But fortunately it was very early, so they didn't stay there too long. And I remember every time I went to Lahaina, some of these students would see me in the community. And they would come to me, and they'd say how fortunate they were that I was there to pick them up before they became advanced cases. So at least they know that it's a—well, not a cure, but you arrest it.

And even with the Japanese people, with the older families who hated to be told, "You have tuberculosis now," we found that with proper approach. . . . I remember one family. The father was found to have tuberculosis, and he had to be sent up to Kula. I had a social worker I worked with, and I just learned that she had passed away. She and I used to go in the home, and she said to the family, "You've been paying taxes all these years. And now when you're sick, you're tax money is helping you to go to the hospital and get cured. Doesn't cost you anything. And you're going to come back. This was an insurance you have paid for. You're entitled to stay up there." And I think that family really accepted it, instead of being shamed.

HK: They had moved to Honolulu, and out of a clear sky I happened to meet them. And they remembered me. And I inquired and they said, "Oh, my husband is out now. He is okay." The family had moved out from the pineapple plantation to here. And very happy, instead of begrudging me for having put them there. And so I find if our own attitude is such that we are helping them and we can share this with them, people are very good about accepting.

Even among our Hawaiians, I used to do things. For example—oh, this was a Chinese man. I used to visit the home. This wasn't the family I was visiting, but I saw this man sitting on the veranda on a rocking chair, coughing and spitting. And there was a puddle of sputum there. And I used to carry sputum boxes.

JR: What kind of boxes?

HK: Sputum boxes.

JR: What is that?

HK: To collect the sputum.

JR: Oh, oh.

HK: I said, "Oh, you have plenty of that. You want to put some inside my box? I'll take it to the hospital. I'll look to see what causes your sputum to come out."

And he said, "Okay." So he puts the sputum in my box, and I would take it to the hospital. And for a while in Lahaina there was nothing for me to do (in the evening). After I learned in the bacteriology course and all what you can do, I borrowed the microscope. I have it at the hospital. They allowed. In the evening I would go over there and make a slide. And this particular slide that I made was full of tubercula bacilli. He was an active tuberculosis (case). So after I did that I asked the technician the next morning, I said, "I left some sputum in your refrigerator. Please check on it. I found a lot of tubercula bacilli on it." And so she did, and it was full of (TB). And so he was an active,

active tuberculosis case. Just imagine, the sputum over there and the germs flying all over the place. And he was not one of my cases. This is what we call a case finding.

JR: Yeah, you just stumbled across him.

HK: Yeah. And then Dr. Dunn, with the positive evidence of tuberculosis, we arranged for him to be admitted to Kula, to be isolated, so he wouldn't be passing (on the disease). And then we had to get the entire family brought in and tuberculin tested and x-rayed.

JR: Oh boy.

HK: So you find new cases. And then I remember we had another woman. We were able to get her into the clinic. I forgot how it was I was able to. A pure Hawaiian woman. They resist and all, but I said, "It's good for you to have an x-ray taken. I can arrange for you." And we found she was an advance tuberculosis (case). (There was) a little baby (with her). (The mother was) coughing and skinny, and the baby (was) scrawny. It's easier to (examine) the mother, because we can't tuberculin test the baby. If we did that we would have found right away. But if the mother doesn't give us permission—whereas the mother, we can talk to her to go in for an x-ray. And I don't know how long—whether the child lived or we had to put both of them into the hospital. So in the early days of my public health nursing, there was so much case finding you could do if you were alert.

JR: Yeah, yeah. Like detective work.

HK: Yeah, detective. And to be aware of the symptoms of the people. And then, knowing the history of contacts and so on. To me, it was the most wonderful experience I had. I also learned---once we had a [fifteen-year-old]. The teacher said she was pregnant, so please visit the home. I saw the girl, she didn't look pregnant to me. Greenhorn nurse can't tell a pregnant teenager from another!

(Laughter)

HK: And so I went to the home, and I said to the mother, "The teachers think your daughter is expecting, is pregnant. What do you think about it?"

And she said, "Yeah, she told me she was." And she was a juvenile court ward.

JR: The mother?

HK: No, the girl was. Because the mother was a divorcee, or I don't know how she became a ward of the court.

JR: Oh, I see.

HK: I said, "Do you know the father?"

She said, "Yeah."

Every Friday or Saturday I used to go to (Wailuku), so I made arrangements to take them in my car to (Wailuku). I said, "If the father wants to go, it's okay. He can come." Greenhorn nurse, you know, not knowing the legal aspect of the case. So when I went to the school, I said, "I have followed this case up, and on"—let's see, Friday or Saturday I was going to take both the father of the child, the grandmother-to-be, and the mother to the juvenile ward clerk.

And the principal said to me, "Harriet, do you know what you're doing?"

I said, "Well, the father wants to go."

He says, "This girl is only fifteen. Sex under sixteen is a criminal act, so you're getting involved."

When the time came for me to pick him up, I said, "I don't think you need to go. You can stay home. I'll take the mother and the girl, and you can come and see her later."

He said, "No. Me father, I go." What can I do?

(Laughter)

JR: What did you do?

HK: I put him in the car, and we went. And what I told him was, "I'm dropping you off here on the street, and the court is right there, so you all go in there." I did not take them in. And then I went to our office, because we had to come in once a week. I went to the office, and I thought, "Oh boy, what are they going to do to the man?" But they were quite lenient with him, because he had been a good man and he was willing to accept himself as a father and so on. And so they didn't charge the criminal act on him. And the plantation vouched for him, that he was a good plantation worker and so on. And of course, in those days they didn't have these shyster lawyers . . .

(Laughter)

HK: . . . getting after me and what have you. Anyway, the girl was put into another home, away from the mother. And when the baby was born, the grandmother took the child. The father of the child used to bring the baby to

my child health conference. I used to worry. I'd say, "Oh, maybe I better leave Lahaina, because he might come with a knife and kill me." But it turned out beautifully. He was a good father. So that was my experience. And I thought, oh boy, I'm having a liberal education here.

JR: Well, you were fresh out of school at that time.

HK: Yeah. And then we had no legal guidance. Now they have, in the health department, all the lawyers and what have you. So anyway, the Lord always watches me. (Laughs)

JR: Maybe we should just back up a little so we can catch up. I mean, I think we kind of skipped over some years. You graduated in '28 from McKinley.

HK: Um hmm [yes].

JR: And then you went to the Mainland at that point.

HK: Yeah, after the summer.

JR: How did that come about? Why did you choose to go there?

HK: Well, being an Episcopalian, and that was an Episcopal hospital. And this friend of mine was also going there. We were both from St. Mark's. So since she was going, I said I'll go over there. I didn't want to go to Queen's [Hospital]. So that's how it came about that we went to St. Luke's [Hospital]. And there's an interesting experience. On the way to St. Luke's, we were on the SS *Sierra*. It was a little tub. It belonged to a Canadian company, I think. And that afternoon, when the man came to take my trunk to (deliver) it to the pier, they put my trunk on SS *President* [\_\_\_\_\_], which went to Japan. We left at midnight. And before I went on the ship, I said, "We better check our trunk." There was no trunk for me. And so I said, "I'm not going to stay back, I'm going anyway." I had a suitcase (with) a few clothes. I borrowed my sister's thin coat. You know how cold San Francisco (gets).

JR: Yeah.

HK: Fortunately, I was seasick most of the way.

(Laughter)

HK: So anyway, during our voyage there was radiogram going back and forth. Finally my trunk (was located) on the ship (on its way to Japan). (I was informed that) the company will (pay for my new clothes). And foolishly, this friend of mine who went with me from St. Mark's (had) put her coat in my trunk (also). And so my coat and her coat were in my trunk which was (on its way to) Japan. (The student nurse from Honolulu who met us at the pier in

San Francisco took both of us to a dress shop to buy the coats and dresses we needed. We both bought coats with a little fur.) I said, "We should have bought a fur coat!"

(Laughter)

JR: They're paying!

HK: But we didn't do that. We bought a coat, which was much better than the one in the trunk, and we bought a few dresses. Then we sent the bill back, and they paid for it. And the trunk came to me a month later.

JR: Now, you hadn't been to the Mainland prior to that, had you?

HK: No, that was my first experience.

JR: How was that? It must have been very different.

HK: Well, fortunately we had a student nurse from here who met us, who helped us to get to St. Luke's Hospital. She was like our big sister. She met us and took us there, and then took us to the store to buy all the things we needed. And it was cold and all, but it was quite an experience for me. And the way we were dressed, with the hat on. And I always say I must have looked like a real country jack, because I wore my sister's light coat, old-fashioned coat. But didn't care, I got a new coat.

JR: That was in the fall?

HK: In late August.

JR: Of '28.

HK: Yeah, '28. And it gets awfully foggy. San Francisco is always cold. You have to have a coat. Otherwise, you can't get around. And gloves, and hat.  
(Chuckles)

JR: Did you have a dormitory?

HK: Oh yeah, we had a beautiful nurses' home. And there were two of us in each room. See, by staying in the nurses' home, it didn't cost us anything. And they gave us five dollars a month spending money.

JR: Was there a tuition you had to pay?

HK: Yeah, there was a small tuition which we had to pay when we registered to enter. But once we were there, we were paid five dollars a month. Big money. But many times, most of the money was (taken to pay for broken

syringes). (When) we would break a syringe, they'd take it out of our five dollars.

JR: They docked your pay.

HK: Yeah, docked our pay. Sometimes we had very little, but even a few dollars helped a lot. And I don't know how much I took, just a few dollars. And my family used to send me a little bit, because they couldn't afford too much. But as long you are having three meals a day and a roof over your head, you don't need much.

JR: And you stayed in that school for a couple years?

HK: Yeah, from August 1928 to end of December 1930. But they asked me to stay in the dormitory, because the classmate of mine who went with me had developed tuberculosis. They wanted me to take care of her. Oh, she had a bad case of tuberculosis. And it was such a shame. She developed tuberculosis before the year was up. They took an x-ray. They never took an x-ray of us before we went in training. If they had taken an x-ray, they would have known. She came from a very strong tuberculous family. And they would have found that she had already a lesion. In April 1929, she had to leave the hospital to go to a rest home. And when she came back in the fall, we told her, "Rose, maybe with your condition probably you should go home." You know, instead of staying in nursing.

But she said, "No, I'm going to continue on." They allowed her to go on. And then the following year—that was 1930, I think—she had to also leave for a while. And then in December, we had a party in our room. The following morning they found her room just full of blood. She had vomited blood. It shows how carefully they were following us. They had never followed her after she came back from the rest cure. And so the roommate called the nursing office, and then they rushed her to the hospital. And then they called me early in the morning to come to the office, because they wanted to know how to notify the family. And so I explained to them who the family was and so forth and so on. And they asked me if I would stay with her. By that time I had finished all my courses, so I was graduated. I stayed with her, I think, (for) a couple of weeks or so.

But this was really a sad situation. (She) stayed in the hospital, (and I was allowed to remain in the nurses' dormitory). She never finished (her training). When she was (able) to come home, (she was transported to the ship by) ambulance. (When the ship arrived in Honolulu, she was transported) straight to Le`ahi [Hospital] and never left Le`ahi. She died up there. If she had come home and got proper care, rested, probably she would be okay. She was such a brilliant girl. It was really sad for us to lose her. But such is life. She had very little nursing. She was so anxious to finish that sometimes she lied about her weight. We knew she was losing weight, but she would put the

wrong weight. The school didn't follow up too much. Very pathetic.

And then I left there to live with (the sister of) a friend of mine. (She) had a lovely home in the Mission area. I worked a little (while) until I went to Children's Hospital.

So that's our training. Anything further?

JR: Well, how do you feel? Do you want to break for today?

HK: Okay.

JR: Maybe we can pick it up next time.

END OF INTERVIEW